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THE THREE JACKDAWS FROM Hursimonceaux

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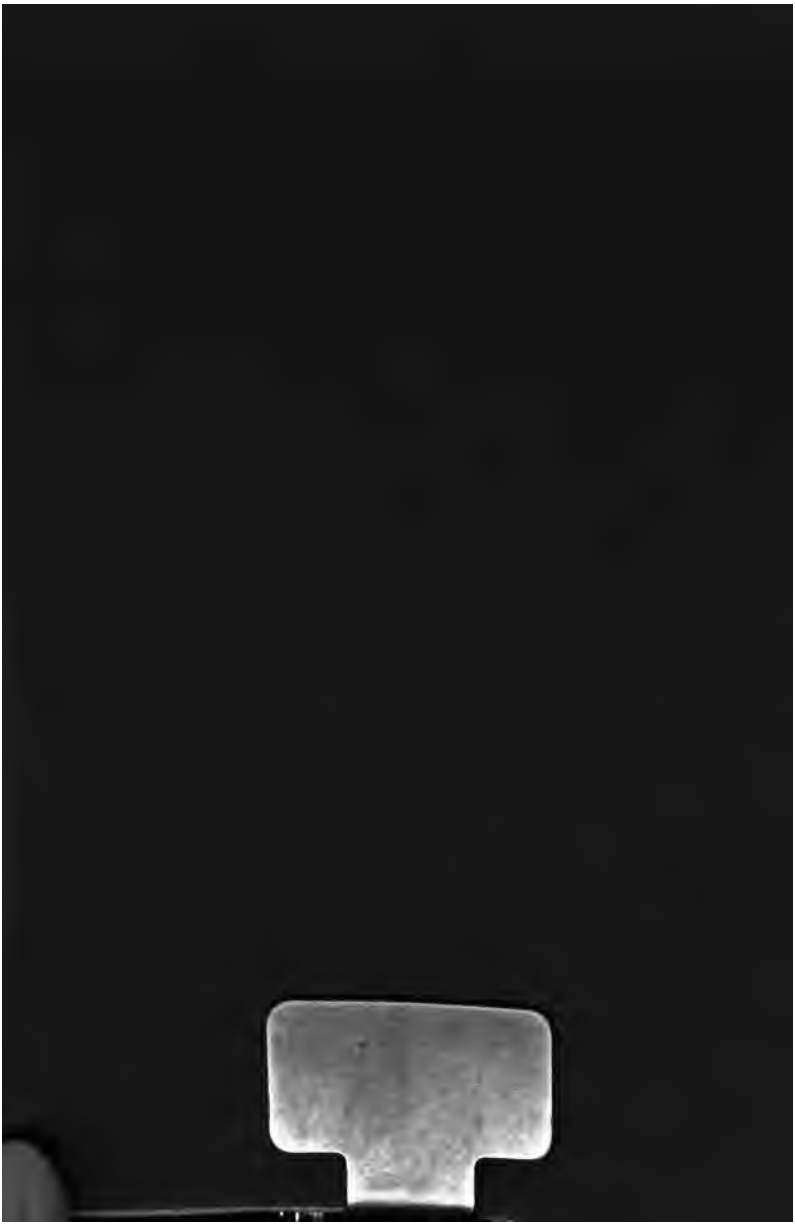

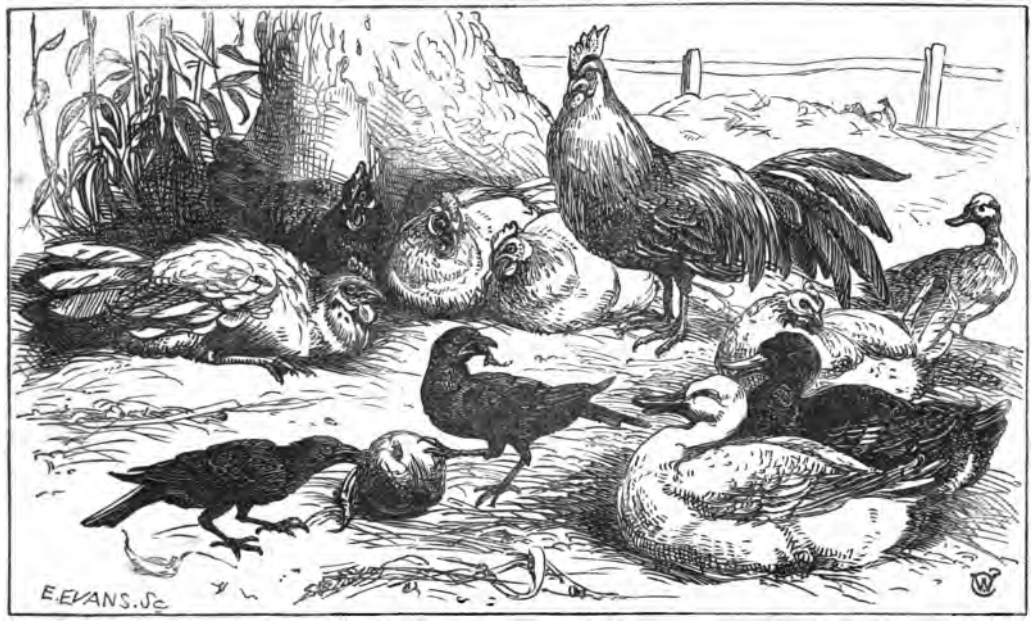

JACK AND DICK GIVING A LECTURE. *Page* 39.

JACK, DICK AND BOB,

THE

THREE JACKDAWS,

FROM HURSTMONCEAUX.

A True Story for Children.

SECOND EDITION.

LONDON:
WILLIAM MACINTOSH,
24, PATERNOSTER ROW.
1875.

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INTRODUCTION.

Dear Children,

When I was a little child, I remember I was as fond of hearing a story related to me as you are, and generally the first question I asked was, "Is it quite true?" In after years, I often stayed with other little children, some of whom are now the Papas and Mammas of some of you; and when I told them a story, the first question they generally asked was, "Is it quite true?" So I think all children like best the stories which are quite true; and now I have written this story for you, and if you ask me "Is it true?" I shall answer, "Yes, it is quite true," and I hope you will be amused in reading something of the history of my three birds.

Your affectionate friend,

E. G.

Nov., 1865.

TO THE DEAR CHILDREN AT LONGLANDS,

CECIL LODGE, AND ABBERTON HOUSE,

AS ALSO TO ALL LITTLE PEOPLE WHO LOVE A STORY,

AND, THOUGH LAST NOT LEAST, TO

LITTLE ISABEL,

THIS STORY IS INSCRIBED BY

THE AUTHOR.

THE THREE JACKDAWS.

In the county of Sussex, not many miles from the sea, stand the remains of an ancient castle or stronghold, called Hurstmonceaux. It is a beautiful old ruin now, but once it was the dwelling-place of great and rich people. Those people have all passed away long ago, and nobody lives there now, except an old man who goes in the summer with two great tea-kettles, and some cups and saucers, on purpose to make tea for parties of people, who go there to amuse themselves by running about among the ruins. But there are some more inhabitants of the old castle that I am going to tell you about presently; a great many inhabitants, and they make such a noise that when you stand near them, you can hardly hear any other sounds —and these are jackdaws.

Very likely many of you never saw one of these birds. They are not very commonly seen near populous places, but they like to build their nests very high, in the tops of old chimneys, in holes in

high walls, or in the white cliffs of our native land —and they especially delight in old ruins. They are very pretty birds, perfectly black, with a tinge of purple over the edge of their feathers, at least it appears so in a bright light, or it may be only the extreme blackness which causes that appearance. On the top of the head there is a round spot about the size of half-a-crown, blacker than all the rest, and down the back of the head and throat it becomes a few shades lighter again, with a tint of grey. Their bodies are about the size of a pigeon, but much more slim, and their legs are very long, so that they can run very fast. Their legs look like polished ebony, so black and shining; and they make a noise something like a rook, only I think they vary their tones more.

One day last spring, I went to visit this old ruined castle, and I was walking about on the grass, examining the old walls, and creeping under broken arches, accompanied by a little girl of four years old, named Lizzie, till we came to a great round tower; and all this time the jackdaws were making such a noise over our heads, flying about, feeding their young ones, and settling their affairs in their own way.

When I came to the entrance of the round tower, I found there was a very large deep hole where the floor ought to have been, which was partly filled up with rubbish, and there I heard a

great noise of cawing down in the hole, instead of up in the nests, and I thought some poor little bird must have fallen down and hurt itself. So I called a man to come and look, and after some trouble, he managed to get down into the hole, and there he found—not one, but two poor little young jackdaws, lying close together, and calling for their mothers, looking very frightened and very hungry. They were only partly fledged, and they could neither run nor fly; but they felt very fat and warm, when they were handed up to me, so I do not think they could have been there long. While I was looking at them, and consulting with little Lizzie what was best to do with them, another was brought to me out of a different hole, and this one was not nearly so big as the others. It was much younger, and had scarcely any feathers, and it opened its mouth so wide, and appeared very hungry. Then the old man who stays in the castle, went and fetched me some sopped bread, with which I fed them all, and the poor little things seemed very glad of it, though it was not their natural food. I don't know whether the two biggest belonged to the same nest—they may have done so, or they may have fallen out of different ones; for there must have been a great many nests high up over head, to judge by the noise and bustle and cawing I heard. I conclude that these three young ones must have been playing on the edge of

their nests, as young birds do when they begin to feel their powers of moving; or perhaps they were quarrelling, as young birds also do sometimes, (and as little children do sometimes, I am sorry to say), and so they must have lost their balance and fallen to the ground; and as they could not fly up again, they would probably very soon have died, if I had not found them; or perhaps some cat would have spied them out, and made a good supper of them that night, or a ferret or weasel might have sucked their blood. So I made up my mind that I would take them home, and as I had no nest to carry them in, I tied them up, all three together in a pocket handkerchief, and made a little bundle of birds, which I thought the best and safest mode of conveyance. As soon as I reached home, I went to the butcher's for some raw meat, which I cut up into little bits, and fed them all round with it till they were satisfied. And they made such a noise, cawing over their supper, for they thought it was the nicest thing they had tasted all day, and they certainly were very hungry. Then I went and found a square wooden box with a lid, and I filled the box with hay, and placed the three poor little birds in it, and they did seem so delighted. They snuggled down into the hay, and began talking in their own language as fast as they could. Of course I could not understand what they were saying, because I never learned jackdaw language,

but I fancied they said something like this:—"Well, this *is* nice, much better than being in that dirty hole at Hurstmonceaux, but I wish I could see mother again, and tell her how comfortable I am—don't you?—caw, caw, caw!" And after a considerable amount of cawing and bustle, they settled themselves to sleep, and were very quiet all night.

I used to keep them at night in a large empty closet in my room, so that I could hear them the first thing in the morning, when they cried for food. They were brought up entirely on raw meat, ground oats (made into a paste with a little water), and sopped bread. It was very amusing to see the funny fancies they would have about their food. I really used sometimes to think that they talked together in their own way beforehand, and settled what they would have for breakfast. Some days they would all choose meat—another time, one would take meat, and the next would turn away its head and look quite sulky, till I offered the oat food, and then it would open its beak wide, and swallow it directly; while perhaps another would choose sopped bread in the same way, and the next day they would all change again, and so on.

I named the biggest Jack, and the next Dick, and the little one Bob. You must try and remember them apart by their names, as I have something to say about each of them, and they

were all three very different in their dispositions. When they grew too big to stay in their box, I used to keep them by day under a hencoop on the grass in the garden. At first they did not like the bright sunlight, and always crept into the darkest corner, and hid their heads from the light; but by and bye, as they grew stronger, Jack would squeeze himself between the bars of the coop and try to run about a little. At first he used to totter like a little baby when it begins to walk, and his long legs were so weak, that after a few straggling steps, he would fall flat down on his chest; but they soon gained strength, and then he would run under the garden hedge, and call Dick to follow him, and they would have fine fun digging up the earth and hunting for insects.

These birds use their beaks just as we would use a little spade or hammer. They dig holes, and hammer away at any hard substance, until they either break it, or find out that it is no use hammering any longer. Sometimes they will try their skill on your hand, head, or shoulder, and very often your foot, which is more agreeable to themselves, than to the person honoured by their attentions—for they can really hurt you when they have a mind to try.

Bob was not strong enough to accompany the others in their little excursions at first, so he usually amused himself till they returned by caw-

ing after them to call them back; and it is a very curious fact, that as soon as Jack and Dick began to be independent, and to take care of themselves, they took to feeding Bob, especially Jack. I have often observed him very busily filling his mouth with all sorts of odd mixtures, such as a bit of meat, part of a flower, some little stones, a fly or two, a spider's leg, and a moth's wing, and then scuffling off as fast as his long legs would carry him, to where Bob was standing with his mouth wide open in readiness, and cramming it all down his throat, at which Bob seemed highly delighted. Dick would do the same sometimes, but not nearly so often as Jack, indeed the latter seemed quite to have taken Bob under his own protection, and at one time they were always together; and so much did Bob prefer his style of feeding him to mine, that he grew quite shy with me, and rarely condescended to eat from my hand at all, unless he happened to be so hungry that he could not resist it—and then after one mouthful or so, he would turn away his head and look sulky; but the moment one of the others appeared in sight, he would go paddling after them with his mouth wide open, and making as much cawing and fuss as if he were starving. So Jack and Bob used to look after each other, while Dick was every day becoming more tame with me, and more amusing in his funny ways.

I could not remember the half of his tricks to tell you, and if I could it would make my book too large, but you shall hear some of them. When first I put the birds out of doors under the hen coop, I had the greatest difficulty in feeding them at all; for, within a few yards of them, stood another coop, with a hen and fourteen little chickens under it. These chickens were a peculiar breed, Spanish I believe. They were all black, and the most daring little thieves I ever met with. When they were scarcely more than a week old, and such mites that I could hold two or three of them in my hand at once, they discovered what was going on in the neighbouring coop; and I never could make my appearance in the garden, for the purpose of feeding my birds, without being instantly beset and surrounded by the whole tribe of chickens, looking like a swarm of bees. They were so small that they could run in and out of the coop without any difficulty. Many a bit of meat, and other food, has been snatched out of my hand, at the very moment I was attempting to put it into the mouths of the jackdaws, by these little greedy creatures. They are so quick and sharp in their movements, that I have often been obliged to throw part of the jackdaws' dinner to a distance, and send them all scrambling after it, to enable me to give the others any at all. Often I have had half-a-dozen at once, pulling and tugging at a

little bit of meat which I held to them, and even rather than let go their hold, they would suffer themselves to be lifted a considerable height from the ground. You cannot think how funny they looked.

Two of you little ones, who will probably read this story, (Lucy and Emily,) will remember having seen something of what I have been describing, the day you went over from Eastbourne to Hailsham with little Julia to pay a visit to the jackdaws.

When the three birds grew too old to stay all day in the hencoop, they used to run about the garden, and jump up on the low boughs of the hedge which divides the garden from the road. At night they always slept in their box in the cupboard. I never liked their staying so much in the hedge, because they attracted the notice of boys on the other side, in the road, and I was afraid they would either steal or hurt them by throwing stones, which they often did when they thought nobody saw them. There was one boy especially whom I was more afraid of than all the others. His name was Silas, and he was the worst boy in the place. He had been in prison several times for stealing, and nobody could do anything with him. I was told I must beware of Silas, for he would be sure to steal my birds if he could, or kill them. I thought it would be no use to threaten him with punishment, because he cared for nobody; but as

he had already been seen chasing the birds I found it was time to do something, so I resolved to try what kindness would accomplish. I sent for Silas, and he came looking very much as if he expected a good scolding. I asked him if he knew that I had three young jackdaws. He said "Yes." I said "Well now, I want you to help me to take care of them. I know that there are some bad boys about who would hurt them if they could. So I want you, whenever you pass this way, to watch that nobody throws stones or hurts them in any way. And if you see any one attempting it you must tell me, and some day I will give you sixpence."

So Silas promised, and most faithfully did he keep his promise. For many weeks, until he went quite away, he might daily be seen marching about the garden or field in which the birds were, and I knew that no boys would venture to do them any harm while Silas was in sight. He very soon taught them that he intended to be master, for one morning when I was out, only a day or two after he entered on his office as bird-keeper, a tremendous commotion was heard at the house door, and when the mistress ran to see what was the matter she found Silas with a little screaming boy, who was struggling violently, dragging him all along the passage towards my sitting room door, intending to deliver him up to me because he had thrown a stone at one of the birds! Silas was persuaded

with some difficulty to let the poor frightened boy go when he found I was not at home. But from that day I believe that *he* never saw another stone thrown, though others did.

Jack and Dick soon began to feel their wings, and it was very pretty to watch them chasing one another in play round and round the house, and up in the trees. They were so delighted when they found they could really fly, that whenever they passed my window they would each give a loud "caw" to call my attention to their gambols, and if I went outside the house door to look at them, they would make a point of flying past me, so close that one wing would brush my face, and at last when they were tired they generally finished their race by both swooping down together, alighting on my head, and resting there. I have often walked along a considerable distance with both birds perched on my head, and they were no light weight either. Dick would come to me almost always when I called him whatever he might be doing. Jack would sometimes come, but he more often would pretend to be particularly engaged the moment he heard himself called. I have known him sitting perfectly idle and nearly asleep on a branch of a favorite tree, but the moment I called him he would begin hammering away, or digging into the branch, as if his life depended on his

breaking off that especial bit, and he was far too busy even too look up.

And now I must speak about Bob for a few minutes. He *never* thought of coming when he was called. I had always to hunt him out and catch him if I wanted either to feed him or put him to bed; for poor Bob was a very disobedient bird, and his disobedience got him into a great deal of trouble, as you shall hear. He always thought he knew best what was good for him, and as he never would come when he was called, but turned his back on his best friends, I had been obliged to cut the feathers of one wing to prevent him flying away to any distance, while he still had the power to mount into the trees and amuse himself.

One Sunday evening when I returned from church I was told that Jack and Dick were put to bed in their cupboard, but that Bob did not choose to be caught, and they thought he was up in a large chesnut tree which overhung the side of the garden. A man standing by offered to mount the tree and look for him, so I thanked him and he climbed up. It was getting dusk, and we thought he would not be able to see Bob's black little body, but however, presently he called out that he could see him fast asleep on a bough, with his head behind his wing, but he could not reach him. I was just thinking it would be best to leave him quietly where he was, and was going to say so,

when the man began shaking the tree violently, which frightened poor Bob greatly, and no doubt he began to think to himself, "Oh! what is the matter? this is not a safe place for me, I'll be off;" and to my great surprise Bob, who had never flown before, flew out of his hiding place over the garden, rested a moment on the top of the house, and then away across a field, towards some high trees at a little distance, and disappeared.

I thought he was lost altogether, for it was now so dark that it was quite useless going after him, so we were obliged to leave him out all night, and I was very sorry for poor little Bob, for I thought he would be frightened when he woke up in the morning and found himself alone; for though he brought this trouble on himself by his disobedience, still I was sorry for him, and I know some Papas and Mammas, who, when they have disobedient little boys or girls, are obliged to punish them to teach them to behave better another time, but at the same time they are very sorry, and it makes them very unhappy to be obliged to punish their dear little children; so I think those little children ought to try and make their Papas and Mammas happy, by endeavouring to be obedient, and not deserving punishment. Don't you? Bob was only a bird, you know, and he did not know any better; but little boys and girls do know better, because God has given them sense to know what is right

and what is wrong, and He has given them His Holy Bible too, to teach them how to do right, and how to avoid what is wrong.

The next morning as soon as I opened my window I could hear poor Bob making a great fuss at a distance, cawing and calling his brothers. I dare say he began to be afraid that he would not find his way home again, for he was only a baby bird, and had never been so far before. You may fancy how frightened Lily, or Philip, or Mabel, or Frederick would be if they strayed a long way from home and found themselves all alone. Don't you think they would cry, and call Papa and Mamma and nurse? I think they would. I thought the best way to comfort Bob was to wake up his brothers and send them out, so that they might answer him. So I turned them out of the window, and in a few minutes they heard Bob cawing, and they began cawing too, and there was quite a long conversation going on between them. I think Bob was asking them to go to him, and they answered in their own language, "No, we must not come to you, but you must come to us;" for presently I heard Bob's voice coming nearer and nearer, and there he was flying back very fast, and popped himself down in his old place in the garden. When I caught him once more I told him I was very sorry to stop his pleasant trips, but as he was of such a roving disposition I was

afraid he would entice his brothers away, and I must cut his feathers still shorter, as I found that the first cutting did not keep him from flying; so poor Bob had his wings made very short indeed, and he could not fly at all, but only run and hop about on the low branches of the hedges, and still he would not stay at home. The very next Sunday, while all the household were absent at church, he made another attempt to be off. The first of the family who returned caught sight of something black a long distance up the road, and on going a little nearer, what should he see but Bob scuttling away as fast as his two legs and his one wing would take him, and Jack after him; while Bob kept stopping every now and then to look back and caw, just as if he were saying, "Come on, Jack, don't be so slow; don't you know they will all be home directly, and then they are sure to come after us. Come on, I say, come on!" And Bob hopped and jumped and ran, while Jack seemed in two minds whether he would follow Bob or go back. At last, when Bob found he was being pursued, he turned into a hedge, as the last chance of hiding himself, and there he was caught and brought home, and Jack also; and I scolded Bob well, and told him that I must shut him up, but he only turned his little head on one side, and looked up at me with his blue eye, and seemed as if he were thinking to himself, "I'll be off again the first

chance I get." And indeed all I could say to him and all I could do, it was impossible to prevent him running out and standing in the middle of the road, and placing himself in all the most dangerous positions he could find.

At last a day came when the poor little fellow nearly lost his life, because he would not mind what was said to him. I had just gone across the road to a poor woman's cottage, leaving the birds amusing themselves as usual in the garden; and when I returned I found the house all in a commotion, half the family out in the garden, and on the finger of one of them stood Bob, looking very quiet and demure, which was very unlike him, and not even trying to get away. When I came to enquire the cause of all this, I found that Bob had been gaping about in the road as usual, and a little dog had run up and seized him in his mouth—at the same moment Jack and Dick, who saw what was happening, set up a great cawing and "yawing," which was heard in the house. A woman who happened to be passing at the moment, and knew that Bob belonged to us, ran to the dog, and rescued him from his jaws, but expected nothing less than to find him dead. But, instead of being dead, he did not appear even to be hurt, only very much frightened, and so astonished that he could not recover himself directly. When I took him on my hand, his feathers were

a good deal ruffled, and his little heart was beating very quickly. He remained very quiet for a short time, but before half an hour was over he had forgotten all about it, and was scampering into every dangerous spot, gaping and cawing as loudly as ever.

After this, as I found it was hopeless to try any longer to tame Bob, I made up my mind I would give him away, where I knew he would be kindly treated; and hearing that there was a family at the Police Station who were extremely fond of birds, I thought that it would be a very good place for Bob, where he would be kept in order. So he was put into a bag and carried to the other end of the town. He found a good home there, though I should think not so pleasant a one as that he had just left, for he had only a small yard with high walls to live in, instead of a pleasant garden, and his brothers to play with. I don't think Jack and Dick missed him very much, they did not seem to care about his departure at all. Bob became a great favourite with his master and mistress, who changed his name to Jacob. But they gave him rather too much liberty, and the consequence was that he took an opportunity when the family were out of the way of walking into the drawing-room to inspect the furniture. He opened the chair and sofa cushions to see what was inside. He tore the curtains, and committed sundry

other misdemeanours, until they were obliged to part with him; and he was given away to a neighbour who was very anxious to have him. I believe he lived very happily there for some time, till one morning Bob was found dead in the yard, having, as they supposed, eaten something which must have poisoned him; so there was an end of poor Bob!

After some time, Jack and Dick grew to be very fine birds. They were strong and plump, and they got some new feathers, and their plumage looked like beautiful black silk, shot slightly with purple. The top of their heads being blacker than all the rest, you might fancy that they wore little velvet caps, and their legs feathered down to the first joint, looked as if they had on little knickerbockers —you cannot think how very pretty they looked in their beautiful black dress.

They began to know their way about everywhere, and became very mischievous; for, when they had nothing better to do, they would fly into the bedrooms through the open windows, and poke and pry about to look at every thing there was to be seen. And, worse than that, they would carry off whatever they could find that was not too heavy. The first complaint I heard was, that one of the girls had lost a comb, and Dick had been in the room just before it was missed—so there was a great hunt for the comb, but it could not be

found; however, this made us more careful to put things away out of their sight. I think it was many weeks before the comb came to light, and then it was found on a flower bed, just underneath the window, so we supposed he had found it too heavy to carry far and dropped it.

One day Dick walked into the room where some of the family were at work, and before their eyes carried off a thimble!—then he led them such a dance all round the garden, they chasing him and he appearing to laugh at them, till he was tired of his game, and then he quietly dropped it. Another time the mistress of the house happened to go into her bedroom, and on the window-sill stood one of the birds with a shirt button in his mouth and a thimble by his side, while he appeared to be planning how he could carry off both at once. Dick was generally the first to begin a bit of mischief. Indeed, he took the lead in everything. They were fond of water, and would paddle and splash about every day. I used to keep a small shallow tub on the grass well filled with water, and it was very amusing to see them bathe. Dick always chose to go in first, and if Jack did happen to get the first dip sometimes, Dick was sure to bustle up, send him off, and make him wait till he himself had finished—and Jack would wait as patiently as possible, generally sitting down close

to the tub, and spreading out his wings to catch the drops which Dick splashed over him.

One Sunday evening as I returned from church, I was met with the news that Dick had stolen a penny from a little girl! I thought this very strange, and I asked how it happened. I found that the child was walking along the road in front of the house, and amusing herself by rolling the penny before her, when down pounced Dick out of a tree, made a rush at the penny as it rolled, caught it in his beak, and flew to the top of the house! Of course I gave the little girl another penny. But the next day I thought I should like to see how Dick managed to do it, so I threw a halfpenny into the road; he was after it in a moment, and actually caught it before it had stopped rolling. I repeated this several times, till Jack thinking he should like to join the fun, made a sudden swoop from a tree, outran Dick, caught the halfpenny, and flew to the top of the wall, then hid the money in a crack where it was afterwards found. I believe these birds are fond of anything bright and shining, especially money, —but you should have seen Dick fly out of the window with an empty eggshell—he used to look so funny; it was like a large white nose growing on a black face. Some time after the affair of the little girl's penny, I saw one day a little boy of about five or six years old with a stick in his

hand making a violent attack on one of the birds, which was standing on the garden paling. The child could not reach to hurt him, but he tried very hard to do so, and looked quite in a passion about it. I went out to him, and desired him to leave off, at the same time asking what he wanted to hurt my bird for. He looked at me as well as at the bird in a perfect fury, and said "Because he took our Betsy's penny." I tried to explain to him that the bird did not know any better, and that Betsy had another penny, so it was no loss to her; but I do not think he understood what I said, though he did understand very well when I told him that if he did so again, I should send him up to the Police Station to be whipped; for the next time I met him, I only had to look in his face without speaking, and he said directly, "I ain't touched 'em since."

How do you think Dick used to serve me when I scolded him? Sometimes I took him on my finger, and told him I was afraid, if he would behave so badly in running away with people's things, that I should be obliged to send him away like Bob, and I should be very sorry to do that, for I loved him better than any of them, and I wished he would be a good bird and leave off such naughty ways. When I talked in this way to him he would first pretend to bite my finger, then he would set up the feathers on the top of his

head till they looked like a brush, and giving a loud "yah," would keep his beak wide open, and keep turning his head slowly from side to side, looking so funny I could not help laughing. Another way would be to set up his head feathers, and tuck his beak down nearly into his chest, and when I laughed he would look up a moment, as much as to say, "What are you laughing for?" and then down would go his head again, till I was sometimes quite tired with laughing at his absurd looks. If I would scratch his head for him while in that position he was delighted, and would nearly go off to sleep after a time. Long after Dick was grown up, he was very fond of pretending to be still a baby bird when he was with me. He would open his beak wide, and flutter his wings in that pretty way that young birds do when they want to be fed, and he liked me to put a bit of something nice into his mouth, just as if he could not help himself. I never saw a bird so full of sense as Dick. Jack was always much more timid, and though he would often do things in imitation of his brother, I never could make him come and sit on my finger in the same way. If Dick had a bit of sugar or biscuit too large for him to swallow, he would put it out of his mouth between my finger and thumb, that I might hold it while he broke it in pieces; but Jack would fly to a table or the ground, and hammer away there till

he broke it. Dick came to me for everything. If he were at all frightened he thought that I could save him from danger, and always flew to my window. If I went out for a walk he would follow me to any distance, sometimes perching on a tree, sometimes on my head. Is it any wonder that I was more fond of him than of the others?

When the fruit got ripe, they used to make little excursions into the neighbouring gardens, and I could generally tell what Dick had been eating by the smell of his breath when he came near me. If he stepped on to my finger, and said "yah" or "caw," as was his custom, I could tell immediately if he had been at the onion-bed, or on the black currant trees. I was always expecting to hear complaints of their mischievous doings in other gardens, but people in general were very kind to them, and liked to see them about. There were only some cruel mischievous boys in the neighbourhood, who liked to teaze them when they could get an opportunity, and I know that they used to throw stones and try to hurt them. Little boys, who read this story, I hope you will never take pleasure in hurting dumb animals; it is cruel and cowardly.

"A man of kindness to his beast is kind,
"But brutal actions show a brutal mind.
"Remember, He who made thee, made the brute;
"Who gave thee speech and reason, formed him mute.

"*He* can't complain—but God's all-seeing eye
"Beholds *thy* cruelty, and hears *his* cry.
"Thy servant he was destined, not thy drudge;
"And know—that HIS Creator is THY judge."

One day poor little Dick came in at my window quite lame, and when I took him on my hand, and asked him what was the matter, he held up one foot as if to show me it was hurt. It was swollen and felt very hot. Some people thought he had trodden on a thorn, but I could find no thorn, and I felt convinced that he had been hurt by a stone. I made a little cooling lotion, and held his foot in it, two or three times a day. It was not long getting well, though he limped for several days. I think that was the only accident that Dick had all through his little life. They were both very happy birds, with full liberty to go and come how, when, and where they liked, till they took it into their heads that they should like to go to chapel on a Sunday, and then I found it necessary to keep them shut up, in order to prevent their disturbing the congregation.

Next door to the house where I was living all the summer, is a chapel, one side of which forms a boundary to the garden. Jack and Dick took a fancy for perching on the sill of the windows when they were open, and peeping in during the time of service. They made the people laugh, and disturbed the minister, which was not right; so of

course, as soon as I knew it, I could not allow it to go on.

The following Sunday I kept them in their cupboard a great part of the day, which they did not like at all. I told them I was very sorry, but I was obliged to do it, because they would not keep away from chapel. They had no right to go and interrupt the people, and as they would not mind what was said to them, I must punish them by taking away their liberty.

About this time I had to go away for a little while, and I was obliged to leave my birds in the care of the family who lived in the house. Little Lizzie's elder sister, Louisa, promised to take great care of them till I came back, and so she did, and her father too, and they were all very kind to them during the fortnight I was away; but it so happened on the first Sunday morning of my absence, that Jack did not choose to be caught. Dick came as usual when Louisa called, like a good tame bird as he was, but it seemed as if naughty Jack had said to himself, "Now as my mistress is away, I won't let these people catch me. I'll enjoy myself this fine morning. How silly of Dick to go and let them catch him—I shall tell him so when he comes out." So Jack plumed himself up very smart and he smoothed his pretty purple-black feathers, his little velvet cap and his tidy knickerbockers, and then flew about and carefully kept out

of every body's reach, till he saw them all go off to chapel, and then thought to himself, "Now I will go to chapel too, as I have long intended to do." So in the middle of singing one of the hymns, little Lizzie's father saw, to his great dismay, naughty Jack make his appearance at one of the open windows—he stood still a minute, peeping all round and bobbing his pretty head to the right and left, till he had made his observations, and then he flew straight to the pulpit, and settled himself beside the preacher! I believe he alighted on the side of the desk, but finding he was not very welcome there, and that nobody wished for his company, he was wise enough to take himself off out of the door; so that he was not many moments inside the chapel, though quite long enough to distract the attention of those who saw him. Another evening while I was away, he did not choose to go to bed at his proper time, and I suppose several people got chasing him at once, which must have frightened him, for he flew into one of the rooms, and then disappeared up the chimney! I believe they all thought he was lost, and there was great running and searching and calling and hunting for Jack, but he did not choose to hurry himself. He took his time to examine the inside of the chimney, and when he was tired, he made his appearance down another chimney where he was not expected, in the wash-house, and

then thinking perhaps he had done enough for one day, he went quietly to bed.

When I returned after a fortnight's absence, I scarcely expected that they would remember me, but though they did not take much notice at first, it was very pretty to see Dick, as soon as I called him and began to talk to him. He stood on my finger with his head on one side, looking up in my face, and listening very intently, evidently recalling to his memory the sound of my voice, and very soon he resumed all his old ways, which showed that he had not forgotten me. The first morning after my return as I was sitting at breakfast, Dick flew in at the open door with a beautiful carnation in his mouth, and laid it on the table! It really seemed as if he did it to express his pleasure at my return, for it was the only time he ever did such a thing, though he was constantly bringing me something in his beak, which he would deposit in the palm of my hand if I would let him. But I did not always give him permission, until I could see what he had brought; because though it was generally a little bit of stone or mortar from some old wall, a bit of moss or a withered leaf, yet he used sometimes to favour me with what I did not relish quite so well; such as a moth's wing, with a bit of body attached, or half a caterpillar, or a bit of fat spider. It was all the same to him, he liked to give me a bit of anything he had. Poor dear little

Dick! the last thing he brought me was a pretty blue bead, but he never told me where he found it.

I do not suppose that Dick thought I was fond of playing with dolls, but one morning as I was sitting at my open window, I heard little Lizzie who was in the garden, set up a great roaring—so loud, that she frightened several people, who thought that she must have hurt herself very badly. I ran out, and three or four others did the same, and what do you think we found was the matter? You would never guess. When we asked her, she said without stopping her roaring, "The jackdaw has taken away my doll's hat! Ah-h-h-h————!" So we looked about, and there was Dick perched on the top of an arbour, just outside my window, with the hat between his feet, apparently not having quite made up his mind whether he would make a present of it to me, or pull it to pieces to see what it was made of. I took it away from him, and returned it to little Lizzie, leaving him standing on the same spot, looking very impudent, as if he had a great mind to make another rush after it.

And now comes the sad part of Dick's history. You know he was very tame, and would often perch on the heads of strangers as they passed, especially if they had anything in their hands which he fancied, though he would not allow them

to touch him. One very windy day, about the middle of the afternoon, I was told that Dick had just been seen following a party of strangers, who were passing the house with large bunches of sloes in their hands. He had perched on the head of one of them, and then a man was trying to catch him. You may be sure I was not slow in starting off to look after my poor little pet. I followed the people for some distance, and found they were a party who had come over by train for the day, and were going to return in the evening. They owned that they had tried to catch the bird, but could not succeed. This did not satisfy me; so I went to a policeman and got him to meet them at the station, after finding out by what train they would return. He searched their baskets, &c. but no trace of Dick could be found, and from that day to this I have never seen or heard of him. I have always thought that those people were the cause of my losing him, even if they did not take him. I believe they either threw stones at him, and killed him, or else they frightened him so, that he rose up in the air higher than he intended, and the tremendous wind of that day carried him away, and dashed him perhaps into a pond, where he was drowned. However, this is only conjecture, for it must always remain a mystery what became of my poor little Dick. There were some people who could not give up the idea that he was actually

stolen by that party of people, and that they contrived to conceal him in some way when they were searched, and I believe they retain that idea to this day. I cannot say I think so, but I should like very much to know what really became of the poor little fellow. I am quite sure if he had had the power, he would have flown to my window directly he was frightened, because he always did so, and his sense was, I think, above what we commonly see in birds.

On the morning of that very day when he disappeared, he had astonished me very much by his sagacity. I was going to the butcher's, which was about half-a-quarter of a mile from where I lived, just at the entrance of the town. Knowing that Dick would follow me if he saw which way I went, and as I never liked him to go into the town, for fear of his being lost, I shut him into my room, requesting one of the party at home to let him out when I should be out of sight. This was done after giving me plenty of time to disappear—yet just as I was in sight of the butcher's shop, to my great surprise, down came Dick on to a low wall close to me! How he discovered the road I took, or that I was gone out at all, puzzled me very much. He went with me to the door of the shop, and then waited for me on a post outside, to the great amusement of several persons within. He did not choose to go inside, not liking to face so many

people. And that was the last excursion he took with me. I have since been told that it is a very common thing for birds to be lost in a very high wind, especially pigeons. If I had only known as much then, I would have shut up both the birds, when Dick and I returned from the butcher's, for the remainder of that very windy day.

You cannot think how much Jack seemed to miss his brother at first; he was always standing stretching his neck and looking about, watching on all sides, evidently expecting Dick to appear every moment; especially when he came to my window, he would peep about to see if he were inside. He seemed quite lost without him, for, as I told you, Dick took the lead in everything, and I am sure they had some way of conversing together, which we could not understand.

I have known Dick come into the room alone sometimes, and if there was anything particularly nice placed on their little table ready for them—such as a bit of bread and butter (they were very fond of butter), or one of their favourite little biscuits—he would just take a taste, and then bustle off out of the window, in a great hurry, returning in a minute or two accompanied by Jack, whom he had evidently been to call. So he was a kind little brother, was he not? He did not enjoy any pleasure alone, but always wished that Jack should share it with him. They were nearly

always together. I used to like to see their fondness for each other; and it is very pleasant to see little children kind and gentle to one another, each trying to please the other instead of pleasing only themselves. The Bible tells us that we are to be "kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another." You will find that verse in the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the Romans. But I have known some little children who are apt to forget this, and they quarrel and push and pull one another, when two want the same thing, instead of giving up, as kind little Christian children should; and they get red in the face, and look very angry, and that is not nice to see—is it?

Though Jack and Dick were so fond of each other, I have seen them quarrel sometimes, though very rarely, and it was over in a moment. But they used to look very odd when they were angry: they would hold their heads up very high, open their beaks very wide, and stand with their feet very far apart, looking at each other. Sometimes they would think better of it, and turn away without going any farther; but at other times, one would give the other a sudden dig with his beak, and make him cry out and run away. I am sorry to say that my pet Dick, with all his kindness for his brother, was generally the naughty one to begin a quarrel. He never would allow Jack to eat at

the same time as himself when I was feeding them. I believe it was because he wanted all my attention; so I was obliged to give Dick a pat sometimes and tell him he should have none if he was so jealous of his brother.

There was one very funny thing they used to do, which I must not forget to tell you. Now just look at the picture at the beginning of the book, and I will explain to you the meaning of it. On a hot afternoon, the chickens and ducks would all assemble together under an apple-tree, or wherever they could find a bit of shade, and sit about just like a party of people in a room; and in the midst of them, you would be sure to find my two birds, making such a cawing, and chattering, and jabbering, that I could hear them round at the other side of the house. They would always be extremely busy all the time, pulling to pieces and examining anything they could find, and looking exactly as if they were explaining to the fowls, what it was made of—its uses &c. in short, giving a lecture upon the subject. Sometimes it would be a bit of dry turf, sometimes a rag of a duster, perhaps an old shoe, a fragment of the master's old gaiter, an apple, a potatoe, or a bit of rabbit's fur. Or sometimes they would be hammering with all their might at a piece of an iron hoop, a bit of wood, or an old tin mug, the fowls all the time looking very attentive, and seeming greatly entertained by their tricks. I

called this, 'giving their lectures,' and everybody in the house knew what was meant by Dick 'giving his lecture,' and after poor Dick disappeared, Jack still kept up the practice every day. Indeed he was almost constantly with the fowls after he lost his companion.

Another thing they used to do every afternoon, was, as soon as the cow was brought home to be milked, they would perch on her back, ride into the cow-house on her, and then all the time she was being milked, they would run up and down over her back, and snap at the flies; clearing them off as fast as they settled on her. I think she must have been very much obliged to them, for the flies tormented her sadly in the warm weather.

Jack grew much more sociable and tame after he was left alone, but he would never come on my hand in the way Dick used to do. He did some very funny things though. He was very fond of helping to make my bed, when he happened to be in the room while it was being done. I have seen him stand on the middle of the bed, and as each sheet or blanket was thrown on, he would jump on one side to make room for it, and then immediately alight again on the top of it, and sometimes take hold of one end with his beak, and try to pull it up, as if he understood where its right place was.

I had an old garden hat I used to wear about

the garden, which was a great favourite of his. He would come to me any where, if he saw that hat, and have a ride on it, but sometimes he liked to have a game with it, and pretended that he preferred standing on my head without the hat, and this is what he used to do. He would glide down from the top of the hat to my shoulder, then with his beak take hold of the broad rim of the hat behind, and with a sudden jerk, give it a toss upwards, which sent the hat down on my nose, or very often on the ground, if I was not quick enough to catch it; while at the same instant, with a jump, he would take its place on my head. I would then replace the hat, while by some extraordinary management of his own, which of course I could not see, he never appeared to have been displaced at all: and then he would repeat the same thing over and over again to the great amusement of any beholders. I have sometimes been standing talking to another person, almost without knowing that Jack was with me, from being so much accustomed to him, and I would suddenly find the hat falling on my nose before I could catch it. It was impossible to help laughing when he did it, and he looking so grave all the time.

If I attempted to do any needlework with him in the room, he was all alive for a bit of mischief directly. He was on my lap in an instant, trying

to pull the work out of my hand. Then he would watch for the needle, trying every time to draw it out as neatly as I could, or he would catch the end of the thread—anything to stop the work going on. Then he would make a sudden attack on the work-box, and I had to run and shut down the window, to save a thimble, a bodkin, scissors, buttons, or anything else being carried off. Once he was too quick for me, and he darted out of the window with a pen-knife. However, he found it too heavy to carry far, and dropped it near the window. Another day I had just addressed an envelope for the post; he watched me very quietly till it was done, and then snatched it up and was off. I followed him as quickly as I could, and found him in an apple-tree, just beginning to tear it to pieces, but I saved it in time.

I must tell you what the favourite food was of both birds when they were full grown. They quite gave up raw meat and ground oats, but they were excessively fond of bread and butter, pie-crust, and a very small kind of biscuit of Huntley and Palmer's called "Pearl" biscuits. Pretty little oval shaped things, about an inch long. If you never saw them, you can ask your mammas to get a few for you, and then you will see what I used to call my jackdaw biscuits. Both the birds were so fond of these, that they would come to me for one at any time, without being called, if I only

held it up where they could see it, no matter how far off they might be; and then, holding it between their feet, they would hammer away till it was broken, and they generally managed to eat nearly a whole one at a time. I think you could manage a great many more than one, as you will think when you see them. They were also extremely fond of milk, and would drink as much as three tea-spoonfuls at once. After Jack was left alone, I used to indulge him by letting him come in at my breakfast and tea-time for his milk, and he regularly took his place on the edge of the tea-tray, and waited for it—then when I was tired of his company, I gave him one of his biscuits and told him to go and eat it out of doors, and away he would fly with it in his mouth.

What was to become of Jack was a question that puzzled me very much for many weeks before I left the spot where he and his brothers had been reared and educated, and where he had lived all his life from the day that I brought him and them from their uncomfortable hole among the ruins of Hurstmonceaux Castle. Jack was growing every week more independent. He had quite a genius for inventing fresh amusements for himself, so that if he came into the house I scarcely dared take my eye off him lest some catastrophe should happen to the walls and furniture. For, even before poor Dick was lost, they were both very clever in

peeling bits of paper off the walls, and there was one part near the hall door which they had cleared entirely as far as they could reach up the wall. In my parlour, too, if I had not been constantly on the watch, I should have had every bit of paper neatly stripped off within reach of the mantelpiece—upon the edge of which they would perch for the purpose of doing their favourite bit of mischief. And a new hassock which I had bought to supply the want of a footstool was a favourite plaything with both of them. I never dared leave the room even for five minutes without first closing the window enough to prevent their entrance; and once when I had forgotten this necessary precaution, I found on my return that visitors had been in the room, and you would have laughed as I did to see what funny things they had done during the short time of my absence. In the first place there was a little brass clock, which I always kept on the mantelpiece, lying on its face instead of standing upright, but it was uninjured. A box of matches which had been standing beside it was lying on the ground, and many of the matches were scattered on the floor. I thought what a good thing it was that they were the "safety matches," and could not ignite unless they were rubbed on the box, otherwise my poor birds might have been very much frightened and injured too, if they were playing with a match, and

it happened to explode in their faces. Perhaps you will say it would serve them right for touching what they ought not to touch, but then you know they did not know any better, and it is their nature to be mischievous, so it would be very cruel to punish them for what they could not avoid. But it is different with little children. I have known some little boys and girls who are also very fond of touching everything they see, and they often do a great deal of mischief, just because they will not mind what is said to them, and *leave things alone* that do not belong to them. We can laugh at the mischief which birds do, but we cannot laugh when little children act in the same way, because it is a sign that they have forgotten that God says in His Holy Word, "Obey them that have the rule over you." Try and remember that, dear children. One day I forgot to fasten a muslin curtain (which I was in the habit of doing) over the open window of my bedroom, and the consequence was that I found all the pins most carefully pulled out of the pincushion, and scattered about on the table and ground, and worse than this, a looking-glass which was set like a picture in a wooden frame, covered with gilt paper to look like gilding, was in one part entirely despoiled of its gilt coat, leaving the bare wood exposed. This was growing serious, so that latterly I was in constant fear of hearing of some terrible misdeed

of Jack's which perhaps I should be unable to repair. My little landlady was one of the most good tempered women I ever knew, or I am sure she would never have borne what she did. Jack had a fancy every morning, as soon as I let him out of my window, which was in the front of the house, for flying immediately round to the back, and perching himself in a large apple-tree which was just opposite, and very near to the mistress' bedroom. There he would sit and watch with his most cunning look, his head on one side and one eye fixed intently on the window, until she opened it, and that very moment in he dashed—not once or twice, but every morning. He could not be satisfied with tormenting his own mistress, but he would go to those who did not want him. Yet so good-natured was my landlady that she actually kept her bedroom window very nearly shut day after day during all that hot summer without a word of complaint. I am sure I would not have done so for anybody's birds, neither did I for my own, for I invented a kind of tight muslin cover, which answered the double purpose of keeping out the intruders and admitting the air. Another thing Jack took to doing, and which I feared would annoy the household, was paying them a visit in the kitchen during their meals. He was very fond of the master of the house, and whenever he could find him seated by the fire he

would be sure to station himself on his shoulder; and has even been known to try and make a perch for himself on the long pipe which he often found in the master's mouth. Latterly, too, he would follow him anywhere out of doors, and often play the same tricks with his hat which he did with mine. I daresay you remember how he used to serve me when he wanted to stand on my head, and when he thought the hat had no right to be there. I was very pleased to see Jack's growing attachment to the master, because I was trying to make up my mind to leave him behind when I left the place, for I had no means of keeping him where I was going unless I confined him entirely in a cage, and that I knew would make him miserable as he had never been used to it, so that idea was given up, and there was nothing to be done but to let him stay where he was—though I feared he would not be so happy as he had been. I knew that he would certainly have to give up his bedroom in the house when I was gone, but as he was fond of being with the fowls he would perhaps have been contented to perch among the trees at night, as they did, so *that* difficulty might have been overcome; but now there arose a new trouble and a more serious one. The mistress used to have a grand wash about once in three weeks, and on these occasions, besides the "lines" which extended from one end of the garden to the other,

there was not a bush or hedge within reach that was not covered with the clean white linen, and one could scarcely walk in any part of the garden without finding a long sheet flapping in one's face on a windy day, or a towel or petticoat wrapping itself round one's head. Therefore I was in the habit of keeping out of reach of these things, and very much did I wish that Jack could be induced to do the same—but no! Jack thought that no business could go on without his assistance; and, as if he wished to do a good turn to the button makers, he made it a point of duty, as soon as the shirts were hung out, to try the strength of every button within his reach, and if he could possibly succeed in breaking one off, nothing delighted him more.

This in itself was provoking enough, but in addition, he would perch on the clothes all along the line, and patter about on them, not always with the cleanest feet, talking very fast to himself all the time, and leaving the print of his claws in a variety of positions on the wet linen, besides in other ways considerably destroying the good effects of the wash-tub. I am not sure that he did not believe that the clothes were hung there for his own especial amusement and nothing else; for I have known him stand behind or walk quietly round the persons who were engaged in hanging them out, as if he were waiting till they had done, and then as soon

as they moved away he would instantly be on the top of the line, and a general shriek and rush would follow his appearance there, and he would be driven off only to be found on the same spot three minutes afterwards. This of course could not be permitted, and it generally ended in my being summoned to carry him off and put him in prison. And then it was melancholy work for poor Jack hour after hour confined in his dark cupboard with no hope of being released *that* day. It made me dread the washing-days more than Sundays for Jack's sake. And so days passed on, the time for my departure was approaching, and the grand washing-day again came round—the last which would take place during my stay.

As soon as I caught a glimpse of the white articles one by one spreading themselves over the garden on that morning I knew that trouble was at hand. I started off with Jack's favourite old hat upon my head to look after him, and see how matters stood. There, sure enough, was my good little landlady as busy as a bee pegging up her linen on the line as fast or faster than I ever saw anyone else do it, far too busy to observe what I saw in a moment, that she was closely followed by her little torment Jack, who was dodging about backwards and forwards behind her, running with his little short quick steps up to each article, yet contriving most cleverly to keep out of her

sight, knowing perfectly well that he had no business there. As soon as he saw me he forgot his mischief for the moment and came to have a game with my hat. Hoping to occupy him with something else I walked away with him on my head to the other side of the garden, offered him all the most tempting things that could be thought of, begged him to take his bath, or to come indoors, to torment me as much as he liked, anything if he would but keep out of the way of the clean clothes. And even as a last resource, I took him into the field, as far away as possible, where his friend the cow was quietly lying down at rest. She was a nice gentle old creature, so I went up to her to try and make Jack amuse himself by catching the flies on her back. This pleased him for a few minutes, but no sooner was I beginning to feel satisfied that he had found an employment, and was looking for a shady seat where I could rest quietly and watch him, than I had to rush at him and snatch him away from the poor cow; for he had just discovered a little place on her back where the skin had been rubbed off, and which, of course, must have been very tender if touched, so that I had to drive him away lest he should hurt her; and so Jack, finding that he could not do as he liked, thought he had had enough of the field, and spreading his beautiful wings flew back to the garden, with me

in full chase after him, in terror for the shirt-buttons.

Oh! such a little torment as Jack was at these times you could hardly imagine, and yet so amusing in his ways that it was impossible to be angry with him. But, poor little fellow, it became necessary to put a stop to his fun. It was plain that it would never do to leave him behind, for he would be a trouble to everybody, and it was not to be expected that anyone could put up with him as I did. And so at last I was obliged to make up my mind to get rid of my beautiful Jack. If any person could have been found who would have taken him to a distance, and kept him where he could enjoy his liberty, and fly about the fields and garden, I should have been very glad.

Ah! little Ralph, I only wish I had known you then, for I think you would have been pleased to have saved his life, and taken care of him.

Living in a cage was out of the question—so there was but one thing to be done, and it was the kindest thing for poor Jack too. He must be got rid of. And I spoke to a person whom I knew I could trust to take away Jack, and never let me hear anything more about him. And so my pretty bird disappeared, and nobody ever saw him afterwards. And now you know why I did not like to tell you this before.

It is some satisfaction to know that he was not

left behind when I went away, and that he could not be shut up in a dark closet for days together, or be teazed and worried by the cruel boys in the neighbourhood, who would have rejoiced in their opportunities for hurting him, when nobody was near to look after him.

And now I must say good-bye to you, for I think I have made my story long enough, and I do not wish you to be tired of it before you come to the end. It has taken a long time to write, much longer than it will take you to read, but if it pleases and amuses you, I shall not grudge the time that has been bestowed upon it.

And now, dear children, I want you just to stop a moment, before you shut the book and run away to play, and think to yourselves whether there is not some little good you can learn from my story of these birds.

You know the little busy bee "gathers honey from *every* opening flower," and I think we should try and gather a drop of honey from every book we read. I once saw a little book called "A lesson from a Sparrow," and you have a little lesson to learn from the three jackdaws.

If Bob could speak perhaps he would say, "Little people, don't fight for your own way, or set up your will before those who know better than you do. I wanted my own way too much, and I would not mind what was said to me, so I lost

my liberty, and I lost my brothers, and I was sent away among strangers." Jack and Dick might perhaps say, "Little people, don't quarrel with your brothers and sisters—we were always happy together, except when we quarrelled, and then we did not feel comfortable at all. Be kind to each other, learn to deny yourselves, and to give up one to the other."

And *I* would say to you,—

"Let love through all your actions run,
"And all your words be mild,
"Live, like God's own beloved Son,
"That sweet and holy child.

"His soul was gentle as a lamb,
"And as His stature grew,
"He grew in favour both with man,
"And God His Father too."

You have all heard about the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who loved us so much that He came down into this world on purpose to die for us guilty sinners, and to save us from the punishment which we deserve.

He does save all who come to Him.

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved."

May you all, dear children, whether your lives

on this earth be long or short, be amongst the number of those, who having believed in Jesus, and washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, shall be found at His right hand in that day when He comes to make up His jewels.—FAREWELL.

FINIS.

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